

INTRODUCTION

Community Diagnosis is a community-based, community-owned process to identify and address health needs of Tennesseans. As a health assessment and planning process, Community Diagnosis involves:

- ⇒ Analyzing the health status of the community.
- ⇒ Evaluating the health resources, services, and systems of care within the community.
- ⇒ Assessing attitudes toward community health services and issues.
- ⇒ Identifying priorities, establish goals, and determine course of action to improve the health status of the community.
- ⇒ Establishing a baseline for measuring improvement over time.

In each county Community Diagnosis is implemented through the local county health council with support from the East Tennessee Regional Health Office. In Cocke County, the Cocke County Health Council (CCHC) was first established through the Community Health Agency Act in 1989 to promote accessibility of quality health care for every Cocke County resident. A list of council members participating in the assessment can be found in Appendix A.

The mission of the Cocke County Health Council is “To ensure all people of Cocke County equal access to quality health care by collaborating with other organizations. Facilitating to increase awareness, while emphasizing the importance of uniting resources and services for a better community.”

The CCHC began implementation of the Community Diagnosis process in 1997 by conducting a community survey. This was followed by reviewing various data sets and evaluating resources in the community to identify areas of concern that affect the health of Cocke County citizens.

As a result of the assessment process, the health council will develop a health plan for Cocke County. The Health Plan will contain goals to improve the health of Cocke County residents. Intervention strategies will be developed to deal with the problems identified and a listing of resources needed to implement those strategies.

Benefits of Community Diagnosis for the community included:

- Providing communities the opportunity to participate in directing change in the health services and delivery system.
- Armed with appropriate data and analysis, communities can focus on health status assessment and the development of locally designed, implemented, and monitored health strategies.
- Provide justification for budget improvement requests.
- Provide to state-level programs and their regional office personnel, information and coordination of prevention and intervention strategies at the local level.
- Serve health planning and advocacy needs at the community level. Here the community leaders and local health departments provide leadership to ensure that documented community health problems are addressed.

This document provides a description of the Community Diagnosis activities to-date. Data will be described with emphasis on important issues identified by the council. Summary findings from work done by other organizations will be included.